2015

10 Ways to Integrate Sustainability into Your Curriculum

Shi Center for Sustainability
Furman University, sustainability@furman.edu

Adapted and revised by Angela Halfacre from a presentation by Peggy Barlett at the AASHE sponsored *Sustainability and Curriculum: A Workshop for Campus Leaders*, June 2009.

Ten Ways to Integrate Sustainability into the Curriculum at Furman University

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Furman Faculty Workshop Working Definition of Sustainability: **Sustainability explores the dynamic relationships among social, economic, and environmental systems in order to enhance the long-term quality of life.**

1. Embedded curriculum – manipulating course content to include sustainability without changing course goals

    - Marketing course: targets sustainability information to particular audience of interest (and might create product).
    - Language course: translates text with environmental content.
    - Religion course: compares texts from various religions to determine messages about social justice.

2. Additional or alternative readings – adding or changing reading list to incorporate sustainability without altering course goals

    - Philosophy: grapple with the moral and ethical implications of food choices.
    - Psychology: add research article about cognitive benefits of interacting with natural environment (could apply to comparing underserved and affluent communities)

3. Altered or new assignment – adding or changing assignment to incorporate sustainability without altering course goals

    - English: writing assignment related to the relationship between nature and society in various genres
    - Communications: Examine the methods of communicating sustainability messages and determine the most effective. Look at ways of communicating sustainability information (language, etc) and determine how these have changed over time
    - Computer Science: develop a program to log energy use of laptops over time and modulate energy use depending on computer application; cost analysis
    - Music/Psychology: examine the effect of noise pollution on citizens of urban environments

4. Altered or new unit or module – add themes related to environmental, social, or economic sustainability.

    - Sociology, History, or Policy course: Examination of Sustainability's meaning over time by different socio-economic groups in a society.
    - Religion: Examine messages of environmental stewardship in religious texts and how religious traditions view human interaction with nature; consider moral, ethical, societal dimensions
    - Biology: include discussion of economic and social aspects of conservation in broader discussion of conservation biology

5. Applied research project

    - Education: develop elementary curriculum about sustainable food choices
    - Business: Examine economic risk and reward of switching to a different energy source.
    - Business: Social justice analysis of government, nonprofit, or corporate employee policies.

- Health Sciences: Examine how behaviors change in dining hall when healthy foods are introduced
- Music: Analyze the musical styles of composers from different socio-economic backgrounds
- Music: Create a percussion composition to reflect the cacophony of noise pollution
- Psychology/Art: map perceptions of places on campus and then make it into an art project with photos of the spaces and the map
- Spanish: Compare newspaper coverage of a sustainability-related issue in two Latin American countries

6. Guest speaker – Local Community member discussing local issue, business practice, or process, etc.
    - Chemistry: What kind of chemicals are used by a local agency for mosquito control and what are the risks and benefits? Are there safer alternatives?
    - Earth and Environmental Science: What are metrics for water quality monitoring?
    - Political Science: How are communities planning for a likely increase in population?

7. Team teaching – invite colleagues to guest lecture or develop new course to be taught individually or as a team. May X is an opportunity to pilot ideas.

    - Various Disciplines: Water, Energy, Conservation, Climate Change, etc. seen through the lens of sustainability: What "ecosystem services" are provided by local ecosystems and how are we doing in protecting or restoring them?
    - Psychology/Sociology: Perceptions of Sustainability and the Environment: How do individuals and groups perceive sustainability and the environmental over time and place? How do we study individual and group perceptions?

8. New course

    - Various Disciplines: Community and Gardening
    - Art: Design with nature – (e.g., constructing a shelter from local forest/field species).
    - Education: Teaching Sustainability: Examine environmental education and teaching methods for sustainability and environmental citizenship

9. Teacher-Scholar Application – use your research in your courses.

    - Biology, Chemistry, Earth and Environmental Sciences: Water Quality and Urbanization Research
    - Psychology: Consumer attitudes about environmentally friendly products or student awareness of ingredients in their personal care products.
    - Biology, Earth and Environmental Science: Analyze runoff from synthetic turf field for compounds that are a threat to human health or aquatic life.

10. Perspective shift: Student learning goals altered to reflect sustainability learning goals.

    - Environmental Policy: Movement from 'doing no harm', 'standards and enforcement' or 'pollution control' to focusing on 'ecological restoration', 'pollution prevention', 'market-based solutions' and 'social justice'.

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